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A

SABBATH-DAY's JOURNEY

TO THE

HEAVENLY CANAAN.

BEING

An EXHORTATION delivered in a Society
of Christian People.

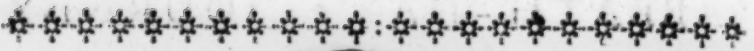
Remember the SABBATH-DAY to keep it holy,

Exod. xx. 8.



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A Sabbath-Day's Journey, &c.

AS God, by his kind providence, has been pleased to appoint one day in seven for his own immediate service, we cannot sufficiently admire his wisdom herein. It seems admirably adapted both for soul and body. Ever since the fall, man has been obliged to eat his bread with labour and toil; therefore stands in need of the rest of one day in seven, that those springs of animal nature, so relaxed, may be wound up again, and the jaded spirits, quite sunk with toil, may be recruited with fresh vigour. Were these times of respite more frequent, the proportion remaining would not be sufficient for the poor to earn their bread; and should there be fewer Sabbaths, the body would be too much oppressed with labour, neither would there be sufficient time for waiting upon God: So that one day in seven seems to be the happy medium. As to the exchanging the seventh day for the first, is not very material; at least, it is not the business of this small tract to discuss the controversy; and the practice of the Primitive Church is thought a sufficient precedent for the same.

2. Now considering the Supreme Being so kind in allowing six days for the necessary avocations of life, and in appointing a particular day for his own immediate service, should we not be thankful, and make the best improvement we can of that one day to our spiritual advantage? How this therefore may be done is the intent of the following thoughts. But let it be premised, that without Divine Grace we can do nothing. All directions without this are but just like giving commands to the dead, which should excite in every one to *look diligently, lest he should fail of the grace of God.*

3. Let us then proceed to sketch out what may be called, *a Sabbath-Day's Journey*; in order to which it may be necessary to set out a little the night before, or at least to make a little preparation for the journey, which may be something analogous to the preparation for the Sabbath, of which we read in the Scriptures.

4. Let all worldly business be concluded as early as possible on Saturday night, so that some time may be devoted to religious exercises in the evening, such as prayer, reading, meditation, self-examination or christian conversation. Supposing some such thoughts as these were to exercise the mind :

" I am a week nearer my latter end ; am I

" so much advanced in the Divine life ?

" How has the past week been spent ? How

" have I profited in the means ? Have I

" neg-

“ neglected none? How have my tempers
 “ been? Have they been such as God’s word
 “ approves, or condemns? What know-
 “ ledge have I gained of precious Christ?
 “ How have my words or actions been?
 “ Have they been seasoned with grace, or
 “ have I reason to be ashamed of the whole?”

5. But, alas! too many are all hurry and
 bustle on Saturday evening, more so than
 any other evening in the week. This is ut-
 terly wrong; nor need it be the case, un-
 less with some individuals, who may keep
 some sort of public business; all others, by
 being a little more diligent in the beginning
 of the week, may so dispose of their affairs,
 as to have some time on Saturday for the
 above-mentioned purposes; and if they will
 not use as much diligence to profit in the
 ways of God as to gain the world, it is very
 plain they love the world most.

6. Having adjusted your affairs so on Sa-
 turday evening, and laboured to have your
 mind withdrawn from the world, rise as ear-
 ly as on other mornings; for why should we
 make the Lord’s-Day the shortest? While
 rising, let some such ejaculation as this take
 place and engage your thoughts:—“ Lord
 “ Jesus, this day commemorates thy rising
 “ from the grave for my justification: let
 “ me not be groveling in the earth; but
 “ as I have laid the world out of my hands,
 “ let its thoughts be laid from my heart,
 “ and its cares utterly abolished, so that I
 “ may

“ may be in the spirit on this thy day, and
 “ offer thee spiritual and acceptable sacri-
 “ fices through the blood of the cross.”

7. Being by this time dressed, throw yourself at the feet of your Lord and Saviour, and, sensible of his favours, praise him. Praise him for his own compleat perfections; for his goodness in sending his Son to die for the human race; for sending his spirit to lead and guide us into the way of truth; and for his gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe; for sparing you the night past, and returning your eye-sight, hearing, speech and understanding; also for the weekly return of the Sabbath, and every privilege therein. Confess your sins, wants and weakness, and humbly implore such things as you feel you stand in need of, and let it be well attended unto, to know your wants, and from thence let your requests be made known to God.

8. Consider what the things are which prevent your profiting in the publick means of grace, and spread them before the Lord. If you have no family, spend some time in reading some experimental part of God's word, meditating thereon; but if you have a family, call them together, tell them the end and design of the Christian Sabbath, and likewise what kind of worship God expects, what sort of tempers and dispositions are necessary to true worshippers, and sing a
 few

few verses, and pray with them. When this is over, it will be time to attend the morning sermon, when there is any, as is the case in most large towns; and sermons at that time either are or ought to be, adapted to the state of serious people, and consequently the most experimental.

9. Let the subject of discourse, during the breakfast, be upon what has been heard, not in a captious criticizing manner, but such things as may be most profitable, and suitable to your own state, or the states of such as are about you. No one can tell how useful it is to speak in a serious manner of what we hear from time to time; it not only helps the understanding, but also impresses it upon the memory, and has a tendency to make a deep and lasting impression upon the mind.

10. Let as little be done in the way of dressing meat as possible; so that none be hindered from attending public worship; and upon your return from church, take a little time to meditate again upon that which you have heard, or speak of it at your table, so that every common meal may be converted into a kind of an ordinance. Eat a sparing dinner to prevent drowsiness, and let the interval of public worship be spent either in reading, meditation, or spiritual conversation. Heads of families will find employment enough among their children and servants.

11. As there is a sermon in many towns, in the evening, at five o'clock, it would be well to bring all the family with you who can go, and, indeed, invite every one to attend; for the Sunday evening sermons ~~are~~, or ought to be, calculated for people unawakened; therefore if you love the Lord, and your fellow-sinners, labour to persuade all you can to give attendance.

12. As soon as you come home, retire for a time, and call over the principal things in your own mind which you have heard, and enquire how your own heart has been affected; note down any thing which you believe would be particularly useful, either by way of caution, encouragement, or exhortation. Lay your defects before the Lord in humble prayer, such as wandering thoughts, coldness, inattention, forgetfulness, or carelessness. Give thanks for any good you may have received, begging that it may abide and be useful in every future period of life; and it might be well to have a little book to make memorandums in, and note down whatever may be of service, which may be a help to your memory, and may have recourse to it afterwards.

13. Before supper, call your family together, sing a few verses, and in a loving manner make enquiry how they have spent the day, and what account they can give of what they heard. Mildly reprove what you have seen amiss in them, such as sleepiness, trifling

trifling or inattention. Commend, in a prudent manner, whatever may be praiseworthy in any of them, that they may have all encouragement you possibly can give; then recapitulate the substance of what you have heard in the House of God, shewing in one view the whole subject, what they condemn, and what they encourage, and then subjoin a short exhortation, how it ought to affect the practice of each one the ensuing week. Close the whole with solemn prayer, suited to the business of the day.

14. After supper, let every one spend the remainder of the evening in such exercises, either in private or familiar conversation, as may have a tendency to impress every thing useful upon the mind; so that the Sabbath here on earth, may be a happy emblem of that eternal rest, which remains for the people of God. Then all our toil shall cease, and sorrow shall be no more, but one uninterrupted scene of praise for ever. Thus may our time pass away in humbleness and fear, in fellowship below with God, his people, ways and ordinances, till we join the church triumphant above.

15. The time of night and a weak body may now call for repose; some hints upon the same, by way of meditation, may not be unsuitable.

“ The necessity of sleep seems to be the ef-
 “ fect of sin, and therefore an awful image
 “ of death, the wages of sin. But, O my
 “ soul, art thou safe in the hands of thy
 “ saviour? Then fear not death, let not
 “ thy frail flesh tremble at the thoughts of
 “ dissolution; for tho’ it is sown in disho-
 “ nour, it shall be raised in glory; tho’ it is
 “ sown in corruption, it shall be raised in
 “ incorruption; tho’ it is sown a natural bo-
 “ dy, it shall be raised a spiritual body; then
 “ fear not, O my soul, commit thy All into
 “ his hands who gave himself a ransom for
 “ thee, he will not leave thy body finally
 “ to perish in the grave, but will raise it
 “ once again; fashion it like his own glori-
 “ ous body, and make it a meet inhabitant
 “ of the New Jerusalem. Therefore will I
 “ lay me down in peace, and take my rest,
 “ for it is thou, Lord, who makest me to
 “ sleep in safety.”

17. On covering yourself in bed:—
 “ Thus will this frail body be covered, in a
 little time, in the cold grave, with its vile
 original, “ *ashes to ashes, dust to dust;*” but
 blessed be God, it is “ *in sure and certain
 hope of a glorious resurrection to life eternal.*”

A Meditation on putting off your apparel.

“ Am I now putting off these badges of
 “ my sin and shame? Just so, O my soul,
 “ wilt thou put off this vile body, and stand
 “ uncloathed before the Judge of the living
 “ and the dead. But, O my soul, hast thou
 “ put off the old man and his deeds? Hast
 “ thou put off pride, unbelief, envy, ha-
 “ tred, malice, evil desire, vain-glory, hy-
 “ pocrify, covetousness, self-righteousness,
 “ with every abomination? Hast thou put
 “ off the guilt of sin? Is it done away in
 “ the precious blood of the Lamb, so that
 “ thou dost not lie down under the heavy
 “ guilt of one unpardoned sin? Hast thou
 “ put on the Lord Jesus? Hast thou put on
 “ his strength, wisdom, righteousness, meek-
 “ ness, patience, humility, love, zeal, sin-
 “ cerity and truth? Is he the joy of thy
 “ heart, and thy portion for ever? O then,
 “ let me praise him, let every breath be
 “ spent in praise, and every power and fa-
 “ culty be devoted to him for ever.”

16. At lying down:—“ And does this
 “ frail body call for refreshing repose? Is it
 “ wearied with its various infirmities? Must
 “ it stretch its wearied limbs, and soon pass
 “ into a state of insensibility? Just so must
 “ it lie down in the silent grave,

“ The dreary regions of the dead,
 “ Where all things are forgot.”

“ The

To be sung before sleep.

O may my guardian, while I sleep,
Close to my bed his vigils keep;
May he celestial joys rehearse,
And thought to thought with me converse,

Lord, lest the tempter me surprize,
Watch over thine own sacrifice;
All loose and idle thoughts cast out,
And make my very dreams devout.

But when I have done, I must add, without Christ all the little rules that can be given, however prudential, will avail nothing; therefore get a real acquaintance with him, and keep it; so may you live a life of faith in the Son of God here, and a life of glory to all eternity:

Even so, LORD JESUS! AMEN.

A Midnight

A Midnight Hymn.

BEFORE the rosy dawn of day,
 To thee my God I'll sing:
 Awake my soft and tuneful lay,
 Awake each charming string,

Awake, and let my flowing strain,
 Glide through the midnight air;
 While high amidst her silent orb,
 The silver moon rolls clear.

While all the glittering starry lamps,
 Are lighted in the sky;
 And set their Maker's greatness forth,
 To thy admiring eye.

While watchful angels round the Just,
 As nightly guardians wait;
 In lofty strains of grateful praise,
 Thy spirit elevate.

But soon the sky with golden beams,
 Thy skilful hands adorn;
 And paint with chearful splendor gay,
 The fair ascending morn.

And as the gloomy night returns,
 Or smiling day renews;
 Thy constant goodness still my soul,
 With benefits pursues.

For this, I'll midnight vows to thee,
 With early incense bring;
 And e'er the rosy dawn of day,
 Thy chearful praises sing.

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